



Cambridge City Council Inclusion and Equity Panel

Date: Thursday, 15 October 2026

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road, Cambridge, CB4 2JL

Contact: Equity and Community Power Manager, Helen Crowther tel:01223 457000 email: equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

Agenda

- 1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Public Questions
- 4 Inclusive Service Plan (Pages 3 - 20)
- 5 Equity Strategy (Pages 21 - 44)
- 6 Cambridge City Council's draft position on the updated Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice (Pages 45 - 52)
- 7 Any Other Business

Chair: Councillor Mike Todd-Jones (Cabinet Member)

Elected Members: Councillors Moore (Cabinet Member), Davison, Grimwood and Haithcock and Todd-Jones (Cabinet Member)

Public Members: A representative from a women's organisation, Andrews Asante, Rensa Gaunt, Nina Shcheglova

Staff Members: Oluwatobi Bejide, Angela Brown, Mia Fleetwood Walker, Beth McCabe

Information for the public

Please note that the meeting will be held between 4pm and 6pm.

If you are not a member of the Panel but are interested in joining to observe the meeting, please contact equalities@cambridge.gov.uk

Agenda item 4: Inclusive Service Plan – Wangari Njiiri, Environmental Health and Licencing Support Team Leader

Why is this paper coming here?

The issue of access to Taxi's and Private Hire vehicles, specifically access to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles was previously raised as a concern at the Equalities Panel. (The Equalities Panel was in existence before the Inclusion and Equity Panel and was an independent body providing feedback on equality implications of the council's work.) In response to this, and other areas of concern raised, officers have taken steps to understand the concern, explore options, and put forward a series of recommendations included in the Inclusive Service Plan.

Summary

The Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) has been developed with regard to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance (November 2023), the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy, the Equality Act 2010, and statutory taxi and private hire standards.

The Inclusive Service Plan supports the Council's vision of "One Cambridge, Fair For All". It sets out a framework to support the delivery of an equitable, dignified, safe, reliable, and inclusive taxi and private hire service for all, including wheelchair users and people with visible and non-visible disabilities, throughout Cambridge.

What is being asked of the Inclusion and Equity Panel?

The Panel is asked to consider the proposed Inclusive Service Plan and respond to the 4 questions posed by the Licencing Support Team Leader. These questions are:

1. Do you think the ISP will support work needed for an inclusive service?
2. Based on your experience or knowledge as Panel members, are there any areas you recommend that officers explore as part of the ISP.
3. Is annual monitoring sufficient?
4. When completing a review on actions would the Inclusion and Equity Panel want to receive a report?

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CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

INCLUSIVE SERVICE PLAN (ISP)



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) is established as a standalone framework within Cambridge City Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing function. Its purpose is to support the delivery of an equitable, dignified, safe, reliable and inclusive taxi and private hire transport service for residents and visitors, including wheelchair users and people with visible and non-visible disabilities, throughout Cambridge.
- 1.2. The ISP supports the Council's wider strategic objective of "One Cambridge, Fair For All" by embedding accessibility, equal opportunity, and social inclusion within its taxi and private hire licensing functions.
- 1.3. The Council recognises taxis and private hire vehicles are a vital part of the local transport network, particularly for people who cannot use other forms of public transport easily because of physical, sensory, cognitive or other disabilities. An inclusive service must therefore address not only the availability of accessible vehicles, but also booking, reliability, driver behaviour, assistance, information and complaints.
- 1.4. This ISP has been developed with regard to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance (November 2023) and operates alongside the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy, duties arising under the Equality Act 2010, and relevant statutory taxi and private hire standards.
- 1.5. The ISP provides the evidence base, direction and actions for improving accessibility and inclusion within Cambridge's licensed taxi and private hire services. Detailed vehicle, driver, operator and licensing requirements remain matters for the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy and associated licensing conditions.
- 1.6. The ISP will be developed, implemented, monitored and maintained as part of the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing function. Operational responsibility for maintaining the plan will rest with the Strategic Environmental Health and Public Safety Lead.
- 1.7. In ensuring the ISP is fit for purpose, the Council will work collaboratively with disabled residents, wheelchair users, organisations representing disabled people and people

with other protected characteristics, licensed drivers and operators, and other relevant stakeholders.

- 1.8. Accessibility needs vary considerably between service users. The principal areas explored within this ISP are wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) provision and the carriage of assistance dogs, reflecting areas of accessibility-related complaints and concerns identified through local evidence.
- 1.9. Disabled passengers may have a wide range of other physical, sensory, cognitive, communication and less-visible accessibility needs. The actions set out in this ISP are therefore intended to support a broader inclusive service and, improve the experience of passengers with a range of accessibility requirements.

2. Definitions

2.1. Hackney Carriage Vehicle (HCV)

A licensed vehicle that is permitted to ply for hire and can be hailed in the street or hired from an authorised taxi rank within the Council's licensing area.

2.2. Taxi

For the purposes of this document, "taxi" refers to a licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

2.3. Private Hire vehicles (PHV)

A licensed vehicle that must be pre-booked through a licensed private hire operator and cannot be hailed in the street or hired from a taxi rank.

2.4. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV)

A vehicle that has been purpose-built or adapted to enable a wheelchair user to enter, travel in, and exit the vehicle safely and in reasonable comfort, either while remaining seated in their wheelchair or using the accessibility features provided within the vehicle.

3. Local Accessibility Needs and Barriers

- 3.1. The ISP is informed by local and national evidence concerning accessibility, demand, service provision and passenger experience. The Council shall consider this evidence when identifying accessibility priorities, developing actions and reviewing the effectiveness of the ISP. The evidence base includes:

- findings from the 2025 LVSA Cambridge Demand Survey, including its accessibility questionnaire;
- disability related and accessibility complaints received by the Council;
- vehicle fleet data, including the number, type, age and replacement of WAVs;
- enforcement and compliance, including refusal of journey incidents and test-purchase exercises;
- passenger feedback information;
- engagement with disabled residents, wheelchair users, disability organisations and other representative groups;
- relevant operator and booking information, where available;
- national statistics, Department for Transport guidance and other relevant evidence.

The Council notes that individual evidence sources have limitations and will avoid relying on any single measure when assessing accessibility. Evidence will be reviewed to identify recurring issues, areas of strength within the trade and opportunities for improvement.

- 3.2. According to the 2021 Census, 16.7% of Cambridge residents are disabled under the Equality Act definition. Of these, 6.2% reported that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot and 10.5% reported that their activities are limited a little as a result of a long-term physical or mental health condition.
- 3.3. However, population statistics alone do not demonstrate whether the accessibility needs of disabled passengers are being met.
- 3.4. To better understand local accessibility needs and demand within the licensed vehicle trade, the Council sought the views and experiences of disabled residents, service users and other individuals with lived experience of accessibility barriers.
- 3.5. Information was gathered through the 2025 LVSA Cambridge Demand Survey, which incorporated a comprehensive accessibility questionnaire as part of the Cambridge City Council Hackney Carriage Demand Survey. The findings were used to inform the Council's understanding of current accessibility needs, challenges and successes within the licensed vehicle trade and have informed the development of this Inclusive Service Plan.
- 3.6. The findings provide useful local evidence, however, the sample size was relatively small. As such, results will be treated as one source of evidence alongside fleet data, complaints, enforcement, and various stakeholder engagement.

- 3.7. The questionnaire contained 25 questions and was distributed amongst 21 organisations representing those with various disabilities.
- 3.8. A total of 110 responses were received. Of these, 35 respondents indicated that they either resided within Cambridge City or travelled to Cambridge using taxi or private hire services.
- 3.9. Of those respondents who completed the survey in relation to Cambridge City, 63% identified themselves as disabled. A further 17% identified as non-disabled individuals with an interest in accessibility and transport provision, 11% were carers supporting disabled people, 3% were support workers, and the remaining respondents comprised a taxi driver and a pedestrian who did not identify as disabled.
- 3.10. The questionnaire indicated that 51% of respondents considered there to be too few WAVs for their needs across Hackney Carriage and private hire.
- 3.11. The questionnaire also indicated that accessibility problems were particularly associated with pre-booked journeys and private hire services. Respondents identified problems including difficulty obtaining WAVs, vehicles not arriving as expected, unsuitable vehicles being dispatched and the need to book substantially in advance.
- 3.12. The questionnaire also demonstrated a range of accessibility requirements. While 34% of respondents indicated that they required a WAV, 17% were wheelchair users who did not require a WAV and 14% indicated that they would find it difficult or impossible to step up into a larger WAV and therefore needed a saloon type vehicle.
- 3.13. Driver experience was also significant. The questionnaire identified concerns about some drivers' understanding of disability and travel needs, the provision of assistance and the way some passengers were treated. These findings will inform disability awareness, customer service and practical accessibility training.
- 3.14. The questionnaire also identified a reporting gap. A significant proportion of respondents who had experienced accessibility problems had not reported them to the Council, including respondents who were unsure who to contact or how to report a problem.
- 3.15. The Council will continue to review accessibility needs, passenger experience and demand for accessible vehicle provision through surveys, stakeholder engagement, complaints analysis, fleet data and other relevant evidence. Findings will be used to

inform current and future reviews of this ISP and the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

4. National and Local Taxi and Private Hire Statistics

4.1. According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, as at 1 April 2026 in England:

- 10% of all licensed taxis and PHVs were wheelchair accessible
- 54% of all licensed taxis were wheelchair accessible
- 2% of all licensed PHVs were wheelchair accessible

4.2. Within the Cambridge City council current licensed fleet, there were:

- 28% of all licensed taxis and PHVs were wheelchair accessible
- 41% of all licensed taxis were wheelchair accessible
- 0.79% of all licensed PHVs were wheelchair accessible

4.3. National and local taxi and private hire statistics provide useful contextual information regarding vehicle numbers, wheelchair accessible vehicle provision and wider fleet trends.

4.4. However, fleet ratios and vehicle numbers will not be treated as evidence, in themselves, that accessibility needs are being met. It is important, to consider vehicle availability, suitability, booking reliability and passenger experience, including the needs of passengers who do not use wheelchairs.

5. Current Accessibility measures and Legal Duties

5.1. The Council currently implements measures intended to support passengers with varying needs, including statutory duties, licensing requirements, driver training, concessionary travel support and enforcement work.

5.2. Legal duties

5.2.1. In accordance with Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council maintains and publishes a register of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles.

- 5.2.2. Drivers operating designated WAVs, under section 167 of the Equality Act, are subject to duties under Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010. These duties include:
- carrying a wheelchair user whilst seated in their wheelchair where required;
 - carrying the wheelchair where the passenger chooses to transfer to a passenger seat;
 - providing reasonable mobility assistance;
 - taking reasonable steps to ensure the passenger travels safely and in reasonable comfort; and
 - not making or proposing to make, any additional charge for complying with these duties.
- 5.2.3. Drivers of non-designated HCV or PHV, are subject to duties under Section 164A of the Equality Act. Duties include to carry a passenger, their wheelchair (e.g in boot of vehicle), mobility aids and to provide reasonable mobility assistance, in addition to taking reasonable steps to carry the passenger safely and in reasonable comfort. These duties must be actioned without making or proposing to make an additional charge.
- 5.2.4. Where a vehicle has been prebooked, under Section 165A, the driver must take reasonable steps to assist the passenger identify and find the vehicle which has been hired. In doing so, the driver must not make or propose to make an additional charge.
- 5.2.5. Drivers of Hackney Carriage vehicles are subject to duties under Section 168 of the Equality Act 2010 relating to the carriage of assistance dogs. Drivers must carry a disabled passenger accompanied by an assistance dog, permit the dog to remain with the passenger during the journey, and must not impose or propose to charge any additional fee for doing so. Failure to comply with these duties may constitute an offence under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2.6. Licensed Private Hire Operators and drivers are subject to duties under Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010. It is an offence for an operator to refuse to accept a booking, if the booking is requested by a disabled persons or on the behalf of a disabled person or a person who wishes to be accompanied by a disabled person and the reason for this failure or refusal is due to disabled person will be accompanied by dog or to prevent the driver of a PHV being made responsible of their duties. It is also an offence for the operator or the driver to make or propose an additional charge.
- 5.2.7. Under Section 170, a driver of a private hire vehicle commits an offence if they fail or refuse to carry out a booking accepted by the operator, if the booking is made by, on behalf of a disabled person or a person who wishes to be accompanied by a disabled person, and their reason for refusal is that the disabled person is accompanied by a

assistance dog.

- 5.2.8. Licensed Private Hire Operators are also subject to duties under section 167A of the Equality Act 2010. Operators must not refuse or fail to accept a booking because a passenger is disabled or to prevent a driver being subject to the duties imposed in section 164A, 165 or 165A, nor impose or propose additional charges in relation to the provision of assistance.
- 5.2.9. Private Hire Operators are expected to ensure that booking systems, policies and staff practices support compliance with these legal duties. The Council investigates allegations of non-compliance and will consider appropriate enforcement action where required.
- 5.2.10. The Equality Act Section 166 allows licensing authorities to grant exemption to drivers from the duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs if they are satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, on medical grounds or because the driver's physical condition makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to comply with the duties.
- 5.2.11. Further exemptions are provided under Section 169 & 171, which allows licensing authorities to grant exemption to drivers from the duties to transport assistance dogs if they are satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, on medical grounds.
- 5.2.12. The Council expects all licensed drivers to understand and comply with these statutory obligations and monitors compliance through complaints, enforcement activity and Test Purchase operations.

5.3. Policy requirements

- 5.3.1. Drivers are required to complete safeguarding and disability awareness training upon each licence renewal.
- 5.3.2. Drivers shall receive mandatory training in regards to supporting wheelchair users and have the knowledge to board them safely and travel safely. The training shall also cover how to use any equipment associated with carrying wheelchair users safely.
- 5.3.3. As part of the Council's existing HCV licensing requirements licensed HCVs are identified by a prescribed silver colour and green stripes. The green identification stripes provide a clear and consistent means of distinguishing licensed HCVs from Private Hire Vehicles and other vehicles operating within the local transport area.

This supports passenger confidence and assists passengers, including disabled passengers and visitors, in readily identifying a licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

5.4. Wider Council provisions

- 5.4.1. A Taxicard scheme is in place to assist eligible disabled residents and people on low incomes with the cost of taxi journeys.

6. Accessible Fleet

- 6.1. Maintaining an accessible fleet is a key component of maintaining an inclusive Hackney Carriage and Private Hire service. However, accessibility is influenced by vehicle availability, suitability and the ability of passengers to access those vehicles when needed.
- 6.2. Cambridge City Council licences a mixed fleet of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Private Hire Vehicles. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining an appropriate mix of vehicles to meet different passenger needs.
- 6.3. The DfT best practice guidance recognises that some WAV designs may not be suitable for all ambulant disabled passengers. The 2025 LVSA questionnaire provides local evidence supporting this principle.
- 6.4. All new Hackney Carriage vehicle applications are required to be for wheelchair-accessible vehicles, subject to the Council's current licensing policy. Where a licensed WAV is surrendered, revoked or otherwise removed from the fleet, the Council's current policy requires any replacement to be wheelchair accessible.
- 6.5. Hackney Carriage vehicles with plate numbers 1 to 121 operate under existing grandfather rights to licenced as non-WAV vehicles, in accordance with the Council's policy.
- 6.6. The 2025 Demand Survey identified a potential risk to WAV availability, specifically the number of licensed WAVs approaching their maximum operational age.
- 6.7. As a result, Members resolved to increase the maximum operational age for WAVs from 11 to 12 years, as a measure intended to support continuity of accessible vehicles within the city's fleet.

6.8. The impact of this measure will be monitored annually through the monitoring of WAV numbers, vehicle age, replacement and surrendered plates, availability and accessibility complaints.

7. Objectives

7.1. The objectives have been developed from the evidence described in Section 3 and are intended to address identified accessibility needs and service barriers.

7.2. The key objectives are:

- Maintain an appropriate mixed fleet capable of serving wheelchair users, ambulant disabled passengers and passengers with other accessibility requirements.
- Monitor and reduce refusal to travel, discriminatory treatment and other unlawful or poor service practices.
- Improve reliability and bookability of accessible taxis and private hire services.
- Improve driver and operator confidence, competence and understanding in assisting disabled passengers.
- Improve inclusive customer service for people with visible and non-visible disabilities.
- Improve passenger information and complaints arrangements.
- Ensure disabled residents and representative organisations are meaningfully involved in policy development, implementation and review.
- Review the safety of WAV ramps and identify measures to improve the safe transportation of wheelchair users and other disabled passengers.
- Explore external funding opportunities to subsidise the provision of WAV services (the Council recognises the need to be realistic regarding any expectations of such funding being made available)

8. Inclusive Service Action Plan

The following actions translate the evidence and objectives into measurable work. Timescales may be adjusted through annual review where operational and financial considerations require it.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Measure/KPI/outcome
Conduct comprehensive Accessibility Questionnaire to	Licensing	At least every 5 years	Published and identified actions

help update and inform ISP.			
Monitor WAV fleet numbers, age, replacement and plate surrender rates.	Licensing	Ongoing	Fleet number report
Monitor complaints received on accessible booking failures, including no-shows, unsuitable vehicles, cancellations and delays.	Licensing/operators	Annual	Number and trend over time
Analyse WAV and assistance dog-related complaints and enforcement outcomes to identify recurring issues and inform targeted compliance, training and service improvements.	Licensing	Annual	Annual analysis completed and actions identified
Review operator booking arrangements for recording accessibility requirements.	Licensing/operators	Annual	% of operators reviewed and actions identified
Roll out practical WAV equipment and wheelchair restraint training.	Licensing/training provider	From Jan 2027	% relevant drivers trained
Review disability awareness and customer service training using complaints and lived-	Licensing/training provider	Annual	Training content reviewed and updated as required

experience feedback.			
Conduct 2–4 accessibility-focused compliance/test-purchase exercises.	Licensing	Annually	Number of exercises outcomes and enforcement action
Improve passenger information on rights and how to report problems.	Licensing/communications	Initial review then annual review	Accessible information published; awareness measured via surveys and online page views
Engage disabled residents and representative organisations in ISP development and review.	Licensing	Ongoing; formal review at least every 5 years	Engagement activity and actions arising
Establish a baseline for disabled passenger satisfaction and monitor change.	Licensing	Baseline then annually	Satisfaction measure and trend
Explore recognition system for drivers and operators who provide exceptional service	Licensing	From January 2027	Identified system to be implemented and advertised.
Review the safety of WAV ramps and identify measures to improve the safe transportation of wheelchair users and other disabled passengers.	Licensing	From January 2027	Identified changes to be actioned as appropriate.
Explore opportunities for external funding	Licensing	Annually	If funding identified present report to Committee.

to subsidise the provision of WAV vehicles or fees.			
Review ISP comprehensively and update	Licensing	At least every 5 years	Committee approved revised ISP

9. Training

9.1. The 2025 LVSA questionnaire identified concerns about some drivers' understanding of disability, provision of assistance and passenger treatment. This feedback and ongoing work with people with lived experiences, together with complaints and enforcement work, will support in reviewing and shaping training.

9.2. Training will cover, but not be limited to:

- features of an inclusive, high-quality service;
- appropriate attitudes, behaviour and customer service;
- visible, non-visible and less-visible impairments;
- autism, dementia and cognitive impairment;
- sensory impairments and communication barriers;
- assistance dogs and legal obligations;
- mobility assistance;
- wheelchair and mobility-aid handling;
- safe use of ramps, lifts and restraint systems;
- refusal of carriage and relevant Equality Act duties;
- communication with passengers with different needs; and
- assessment of knowledge and practical skills.

9.3. Private hire operators and customer facing staff involved in service delivery should receive appropriate disability awareness training or assessment, consistent with the DfT best practice guidance.

9.4. Views of disabled residents and disability organisations in the design and, where practicable, delivery or evaluation of accessibility training shall be sought.

10. Booking and Customer Service

10.1. The 2025 LVSA questionnaire identified booking reliability as a significant accessibility issue. The Council notes that a WAV being licensed does not guarantee that a disabled passenger can obtain a suitable vehicle when required.

- 10.2. Work shall be undertaken with licensed operators to promote booking arrangements which allow passengers to state their accessibility requirements, including wheelchair use, mobility assistance, assistance dogs and communication needs.
- 10.3. Licensed operators should, where reasonably practicable, provide appropriate confirmation that the requested vehicle is suitable for the stated requirement.
- 10.4. Evidence of repeated failures to provide suitable accessible vehicles shall be monitored and enforcement officers shall consider proportionate enforcement action within their legal and licensing powers.
- 10.5. Officers shall review the accessibility of passenger information. Information relating to passenger rights, accessibility, complaints procedures, assistance dogs, wheelchair carriage and available concessions will be made available in accessible formats, and reasonable adjustments will be considered where required.
- 10.6. The Council will promote consistent standards of respectful and dignified customer service.

11. Enforcement

- 11.1. The Council will continue to implement active compliance monitoring, including mystery shopping/test-purchase exercises, to assess driver conduct, refusal rates, assistance provision, booking reliability and customer experience.
- 11.2. The Council is committed to undertaking between two and four accessibility focused compliance exercises annually, subject to operational capacity and resources.
- 11.3. Outcomes will inform driver improvement measures, training, formal enforcement action, suspension or revocation proceedings, prosecution where appropriate, and future policy amendments.
- 11.4. Outcomes will also support in identifying those within the trade who provide exceptional service.
- 11.5. As part of their duties, officers will continue to monitor compliance with applicable Equality Act obligations concerning refusal of journey, assistance, additional charging and other discriminatory treatment.

- 11.6. Where an operator or driver is repeatedly associated with accessibility failures, the Council will consider proportionate escalation in accordance with the Enforcement policy and legal powers.

12. Complaints

- 12.1. The Council will maintain multiple complaint reporting pathways, including telephone, online routes and email. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for complainants with communication or accessibility needs.
- 12.2. The 2025 LVSA questionnaire indicated that some passengers did not know who to contact or how to report accessibility problems. Officers will review the way in which complaints information is publicised and will actively promote reporting.
- 12.3. Passenger information will explain what disabled passengers can expect and how to report accessibility concerns, including refusal of journey, failures to provide required assistance, assistance dog issues, unsuitable vehicles, wheelchair carriage, accessible booking failures and discriminatory behaviour. Information will also explain what details may assist the Council in investigating a complaint.
- 12.4. Complaints concerning refusal of journey, unsafe loading, discriminatory conduct, failure to provide required assistance or other licensing breaches may result in investigation, driver interview, warning, training, suspension, revocation or prosecution where appropriate.
- 12.5. Officers shall analyse complaints data by theme and outcome and use the findings to inform training, compliance work and future policy.

13. Engagement

- 13.1. Officers will engage with disabled residents, wheelchair users, disability advocacy organisations, people with other protected characteristics, drivers, operators, and community stakeholders.
- 13.2. The council shall share any consultations regarding changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing policy with relevant groups and share outcome and findings with them.
- 13.3. Officers will maintain regular communication with the trade, including through the licensing newsletter, where equality and accessibility information will be included.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1. Key Performance Indicators

- Number and percentage of licensed Hackney Carriages and PHVs that are WAVs.
- Number and age profile of WAVs.
- Number of reported accessible booking failures, including no-shows, unsuitable vehicles, cancellations and significant delays.
- Number of disability related complaints.
- Number of refusal of journey incidents investigated and outcomes.
- Number of accessibility focused test-purchase exercises undertaken and their outcomes.
- Percentage of drivers completing practical WAV training.
- Passenger satisfaction among disabled residents and service users.
- Awareness of how to report accessibility problems.
- Stakeholder engagement activity undertaken and resulting actions or improvements identified.

14.2. Prior to the commencement of monitoring, baselines will be established where necessary before setting improvement targets. Targets will be proportionate, evidence based and reviewed through the annual action plan review.

14.3. In monitoring the ISP, the Council will consider the evidence as a whole and will seek to identify trends and recurring accessibility issues across complaints, fleet information, enforcement and compliance activity, passenger feedback and stakeholder engagement.

14.4. Where evidence indicates that an accessibility issue is emerging or that an existing action is not achieving the intended outcome, officers will consider whether additional evidence, further targeted action or an earlier review of the ISP is required.

14.5. This implementation of this ISP will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually against the action plan and KPIs.

14.6. A comprehensive review of the ISP will be undertaken at least every five years. The review will consider changes in local population and accessibility needs, current and unmet/met demand, WAV availability and suitability, booking reliability, complaints and enforcement data, passenger satisfaction, stakeholder feedback, driver and operator feedback, and changes to legislation or national guidance.

14.7. The current ISP will be made available on the Council's website and the Council will consider alternative accessible formats and reasonable adjustments.

15. Conclusion

15.1. Cambridge City Council is committed to supporting inclusive taxi and private hire services that promote equality, independence, social participation and public confidence.

15.2. Through this ISP, the Council, as the Licensing Authority, will support and maintain a resilient accessible fleet provision whilst recognising that accessibility depends on more than vehicle numbers alone. It will look to address fleet suitability, driver and operator competence, passenger information, complaints, enforcement and meaningful involvement of disabled people.

15.3. The 2025 LVSA accessibility questionnaire provides important local evidence of both positive experiences and significant barriers. The Council will use this evidence alongside wider data and future passenger engagement to improve services continually.

15.4. The Council recognises that inclusive transport policy must remain responsive to changing community needs, and national best practice. The ISP will therefore be monitored annually and comprehensively reviewed at least every five years.

16. Background Documents

1. [Equality Act 2010](#)
2. [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy](#)
3. [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Handbook](#)
4. [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Disabled Persons\) Act 2022](#)
5. [Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)
6. [Census 2021](#)
7. [LVSA Cambridge Final Report 2025](#)
8. [Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England: 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
9. [Taxicard - Cambridge City Council](#)

Item 5: Equity Strategy

Presented by Helen Crowther, Equity and Community Power Manager, and Keryn Jalli, Strategic Resettlement and Community Equity Lead

Background

Cambridge is a prosperous place, but the City's opportunities are not experienced equally. Cambridge City Council is committed to addressing inequality. We have recently engaged with around 573 people from communities experiencing marginalisation, discrimination and/or inequality on what belonging means to them, and what would support them and their communities to thrive. We want our work to be based on what communities have told us is important to them and are developing an Equity Strategy, recognising that people face different barriers which need different solutions to address.

If you require this document in Word version for a screen reader, please email equalities@cambridge.gov.uk.

What is being asked of the Inclusion and Equity Panel?

1. Do you think that the actions we are proposing as part of the Equity Strategy will make a difference?
2. Do you have other ideas for how we can make an impact?
3. What do you think of the draft core values of the Equity Strategy?
4. What are your hopes for the Equity Strategy?

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Agenda item 5: Equity Strategy

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To be presented by Keryn Jalli, Strategic Resettlement and Community Equity Lead, and Helen Crowther, Equity and Community Power Manager

One Cambridge, fair for all

What is the starting point for our Equity Strategy ?

Cambridge is a prosperous place, but the City's opportunities are not experienced equally

Cambridge City Council is committed to addressing inequality

We want our work to be based on what communities have told us is important to them

We will focus on Equity – recognising that people face different barriers and which need different solutions

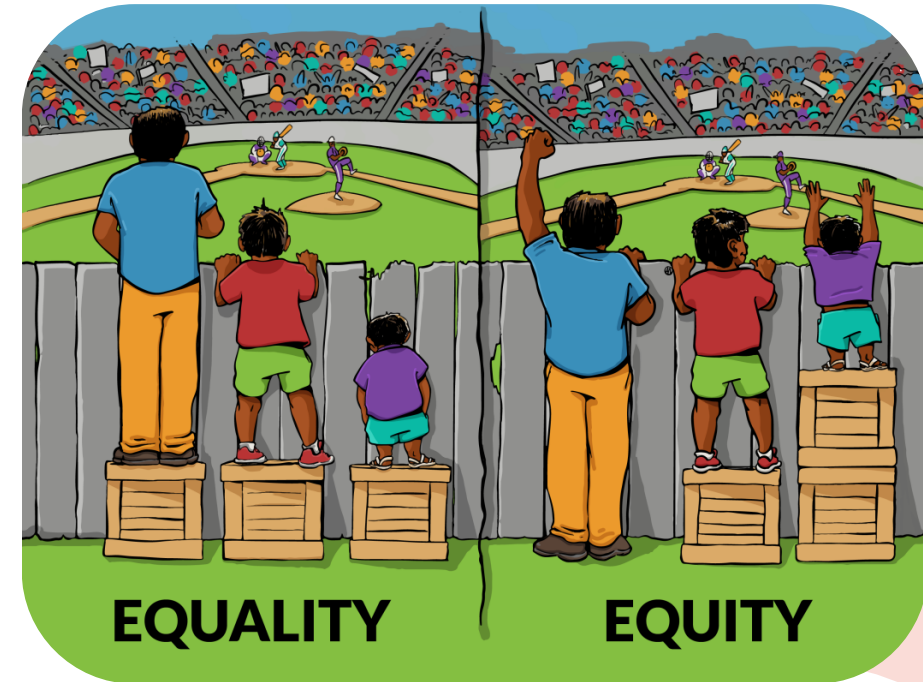
Why are we doing this?

Our Purpose:

- To better understand peoples lived experience
- Identify solutions that work for specific communities
- Create a feedback loop that builds trust with marginalised people

Which enables the Council to develop a strategy that:

- Embeds lived experience into the Council's work, policies and decision making
- Identifies key opportunities to improve inclusion in the city.
- Guides our approach to working alongside marginalised communities



Cambridge at a glance

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Cambridge is one of the most prosperous, healthy and highly educated cities in England

Cambridge is rich in community organisations and community action

Most residents in Cambridge enjoy a high quality of life. Cambridge's population is diverse and accepting

Disability employment rate is lower in Cambridge than the national average

Some households experience low pay, food and fuel poverty, and there are pockets of child poverty within the City

Cambridge is one of the least affordable cities in the country, with high levels of income inequality

One Cambridge, fair for all

Our engagement to inform the Equity Strategy

Designed and delivered with trusted community organisations



Focussed on understanding:

1. What community means to people
2. What already exists that give people a sense of belonging or helps them to thrive
3. What needs to change

- Engaged with over 573 people
- 32 different engagement activities
- Focused on communities experiencing inequality and discrimination

What we heard and what want to do about it

Overview of our engagement

Key Points:

Cambridge's communities are rich in strengths, relationships and diversity

People value the culture, leisure and natural environments within the city

Structural, economic and social barriers limit opportunities for people to participate, connect, belong and thrive

These barriers are especially present for those most marginalised, but crucially can be experienced differently by different communities

The engagement identified **10 themes** that improved and impacted on people's feelings of belonging in Cambridge and opportunities to thrive:

1. Community and Connection
2. Transport
3. Pace and Scope of Change
4. Inequality and Cost of Living
5. Natural Environment and Physical Space
6. Cultural and Leisure Opportunities
7. Access to Services
8. Safety
9. Education and Employment
10. Youth Provision

Community and connection

“Belonging is not simply about being physically present. It is about being able to participate safely, being treated with dignity and having your own account of your body and needs taken seriously.” – Disabled participant

“If you are part of the community, you become someone providing and giving support to it, which encourages a lot of autonomy for people” – Jewish participant

What we heard:

Community activities help communities to feel connected and give them a sense of belonging. These were especially important for people that experience discrimination

There's a need for more places to connect and access services

Some communities, such as Deaf and Travelling Communities feel isolated

What we already do:

Invest over £1 million into community organisations through our Community Grants

Communicate our commitment to equality

What we could do differently:

Create opportunities for different communities to come together

Explore the development of Community Hubs, where residents can access a range of information and services in one place

Explore how we make our values and commitment to equity even more visible

Transport

“Change the way transport is set up so I can use the taxi or a bus, so I can travel as a human being rather than travel as a problem.” - Disabled participant

What we heard:

People valued walkability of Cambridge and ease of cycling

There's a big need for more accessible taxi options

The reliability of and space on buses, poor road and pavement conditions, lack of disabled parking and blocked pavements are big issues

These issues reduce people's independence, their ability to participate in community life, access employment, education and services. Especially for disabled people.

What we already do:

Provide training to taxi drivers to improve their understanding of disabled passengers' needs

What we could do differently:

Create an Inclusive Service Plan to make sure taxi and private hire services are accessible, inclusive and safe for all users

Work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), so that resident's experiences inform their future Transport Strategies

Pace and Scope of Change

“I now feel like a fish out of water” – Older resident

What we heard:

Some communities raised concerns about being left behind by the nature and pace of growth

People shared feelings of loss and frustration that spaces geared towards residents, like the Grafton Centre and Beehive, were being redeveloped into laboratory and office spaces

People felt that new development receives more investment than existing services and spaces, and infrastructure investment was not keeping pace with growth or meeting community needs.

What we already do:

We have a [Shaping Neighbourhoods](#) approach, where residents input into and influence decision on Council developments

What we could do differently:

Listen to and co-design with communities when proposing change, fund them for their involvement and build trust by feeding back what has been done

Build the evidence base for more community space within the [Local Plan](#), future-proofing community infrastructure in the city

Inequality and cost of living

“Cambridge is becoming a city for the wealthy” – Pride participant

What we heard:

Multiple communities shared concerns about the unaffordability of living in Cambridge and how this impacts their ability to participate in community life

People specifically spoke about the increased cost of living, high rental costs, the cost of transport and childcare, and a lack of free spaces where people could come together

Many felt that benefits of wealth and privilege were not shared across the city. Specifically spoke about the relationship between Cambridge University and the rest of the city

What we already do:

We have built over 850 Council homes since 2018

We run a Tenancy Sustainment Service, that helps people reduce their debts, maximise their income and maintain their tenancy

We offer short term funds to help people cover their rent

What we could do differently:

Deliver the new Inclusion and Equity Panel, enabling residents and community organisations to directly inform Council decisions

Build 1,400 more Council homes by 2036

Research and co-design solutions to people experiencing furniture poverty

Provide personalised budgets, to help address issues for people with complex needs who are in crisis

Natural environment and physical space

“If I could change one thing about Cambridge, it would be the constant conflict between preserving the city’s heritage and ensuring everyday accessibility.” – Disabled participant

What we heard:

People valued access to nature and green space. Has positive impacts on mental and physical health and social connection

Disabled and older people identified issues to accessing disabled/changing places toilets and benches for people less mobile

Physical barriers like narrow pavements, lack of dropped curbs, loose paving slabs, uneven and blocked pathways create danger for those using mobility aids, and for blind and partially sighted people - Cambridge’s historic streets and design made it feel it is not set up for disabled people

What we already do:

Provide public toilets at 13 locations. Most toilets have accessible facilities and 5 have changing places (fully accessible) toilets

Offer free trees and shrubs to increase people’s access to nature

What we could do differently:

Explore how Council assets can be used to enhance the benefits they bring to communities as part of the [Council’s Asset Review](#). This review will look at how Council-owned buildings and other property assets are used, including their wider value to the community

Culture and leisure opportunities

“Cambridge has a lot of things for those [who can] afford it” – Travelling Community participant

“I can walk out of my door and in 20 minutes be standing in front of a Monet!” – Pride participant

What we heard:

People praised the variety of cultural and leisure activities. There was a desire for more free community events and activities

Women shared the need for more free or affordable childcare to enable them to access activities, or child-friendly events/activities

Disabled and older people shared how inaccessible venues and transport issues create barriers to participation.

Several groups felt communication on events was inaccessible or scarce making it difficult to know what is going on

What we already do:

Offer free cultural activities, such as [Music in the Parks](#) and the [Out of the Ordinary Festival](#)

Offer community centre cafes and foyers as free places for people to meet

What we could do differently:

Improve how we communicate so that it is more accessible

Support opportunities for communities to celebrate their cultures and identities

Access to services

"What is the point of local authorities putting everything online when they know we can't access it?" – Older participant

"People that are supposed to be helping us need to make sure they know our ways." – Travelling Community participant

What we heard:

Disabled people described difficulties obtaining reasonable adjustments, leaving them feeling unheard and unsupported

Women, Travelling communities and refugees said services need to better understand trauma and people's cultural backgrounds. Participants also described difficulty getting timely, free mental health support

Migrant and Deaf communities shared communication barriers as a significant source of exclusion

What we already do:

Provide interpretation and translation, including BSL access to customer services.

Provide support for Travelling communities to better access services through making connections and advocacy

What we could do differently:

Improve awareness of reasonable adjustments and conduct accessibility and inclusion audits of services with residents to improve Council services

Work with communities to develop the Council's response to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's updated Code of Practice for public bodies](#)

Safety

“It feels safe most of the time” – Chai and Chat participant

“Queer friendly spaces. I feel safe.” – LGBTQ participant

What we heard:

Cambridge generally felt safe, but communities that experienced hate, violence and discrimination felt unsafe in the city.

Women often change their behaviour to avoid harassment impacting their freedom of movement, capacity to participate and contribute to community life

LGBTQ+ people shared the importance of declarative statements, backed by action, stating that LGBTQ+ and/or trans people “are welcome here” as they are experiencing increased hate and hostility, especially transgender people

Racially minoritised and faith communities shared the impact of international and national events on their feelings and experiences of safety

What we already do:

Remove offensive graffiti urgently

Work through [Cambridge’s Community Safety Partnership](#) to tackle hate and support community cohesion

What we could do differently:

Promote active bystander training to challenge harassment safely and to give people the confidence to stand up for victims of hate

Train Council staff on Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Education, employment and youth provision

“You can't put square pegs in round holes, we need a more diverse offer for young people” – Young person, Included focus group

What we heard:

Racially minoritised and migrant communities shared the importance of support to access employment opportunities. This included support with learning English, to access employment as an essential way to develop community connection

There's a desire for more support and provision for children and young people

Young people wanted more spaces where they felt safe

It is difficult for young people to get work experience and they felt opportunities are often linked to privilege

What we already do:

Fund English classes and employment support for refugees

Run [Hello Summer](#), funding community organisations to provide free activities for children, young people and families

What we could do differently:

Support more investment in [Creative Futures](#), providing opportunities for young people within the creative industries

Invest in the [Included Programme](#), building clear pathways to fulfilling careers from early years to early adulthood. Included is a city-wide programme with a focus on young people facing disadvantage or at risk not being in education, employment or training

How does what we have heard shape our approach?

Our Core Values to tackle inequality

To address the barriers residents face, we need to build on our strengths and go further.

We are proposing these core values for the Council to drive the change needed to deliver our Equity Strategy:

1. Lived experience is valued, it shapes and challenges our thinking
2. Communities have the power, influence and confidence to shape decisions that affect them
3. We value, listen to and trust in community leaders and organisations
4. We work collaboratively with others to deliver change
5. We focus on equity, not just equality
6. Community wealth, skills and resources are retained, developed and shared locally
7. We recognise our role in creating barriers and take action to remove them

Key roles for the Council

Strategic Leader

The responsibility to tackle inequality and injustice is one which must be shared.

Tackling these challenges requires us to be bold. We must use our platform as a community leader to listen and to influence – putting the community's voice at the heart of our city's future

Service Provider

The Council has a direct role in the lives of our residents. We're the city's largest social landlord, we manage community centres and care for the city's green spaces. We are committed to making sure our services are accessible and inclusive. By listening to residents' lived experience, we can examine how we provide these services and make meaningful changes.

Funder

We are a large local funder and commissioner.

We want to make sure that those we commission to deliver goods and services are promoting diversity, equity and adding value to our communities.

Questions for the Inclusion and Equity Panel

Do you think the actions we're proposing will make a difference?

Do you have other ideas for how we can make an impact?

What do you think of our core values?

What are your hopes for the Equity Strategy?

Key dates

Late October/early November to mid-December:

Consultation on draft Equity Strategy

February:

Formal approval of Equity Strategy



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Agenda item 6: Cambridge City Council's draft position on the updated Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice

Background paper by Gina Warren, Community Equity Officer

To be presented by Keryn Jalli, Strategic Resettlement and Community Equity Lead, and Helen Crowther, Equity and Community Power Manager

Briefing for the Inclusion and Equity Panel:

Purpose of this briefing

This briefing explains the updated Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice, the changes arising from the Supreme Court judgment in For Women Scotland, the potential equality impacts identified by the EHRC, and Cambridge City Council's proposed strategic approach. It is intended to support discussion by the Inclusion and Equity Panel.

1. Background

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is Great Britain's independent equality and human rights regulator. Its Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations explains how the Equality Act 2010 applies to organisations providing services and carrying out public functions.

The previous Code dated from 2011. It has been updated to reflect changes in the law and court decisions since then. Following the April 2025 Supreme Court judgment in For Women Scotland, further changes were made. The revised Code came into force on 5 August 2026.

The Supreme Court held that the terms “sex”, “woman” and “man” in the Equality Act refer to biological sex. The Code covers a range of equality issues, but this briefing focuses on the changes linked to the Supreme Court judgment and what they mean for Council facilities and services.

Important to note

The EHRC Guidance is not itself law but sets out a framework for applying the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Gender reassignment remains protected under the Equality Act. Trans people continue to be protected from discrimination and harassment.

A Task and Finish group has been set up to help shape the Council's response to the Code and how that response is communicated. The group will give recommendations to the [Council's Cabinet](#), who

will decide on the Council's response to the Code. The Task and Finish group is made up of community organisations, cross-party councillors from the Inclusion and Equity Panel and council officers. The community organisations represent groups particularly affected by the changes, including disabled people, women, and trans and non-binary people.

Key Point

The Council is committed to safety and rights of all those who use our services and facilities, so that no one is excluded from public services and everyone is treated with respect.

2. What the changes mean for services

Under the Equality Act 2010, services should be provided without discrimination, but the exception to this is single-sex services.

What is a single-sex service?

Under The Equality Act some services can be provided separately for women and men, or only to one sex, where there is a clear and justified reason. This is known as the single-sex exception.

The legal test to apply the exception is whether the restriction is a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim". In simple terms, it must be a necessary and reasonable way of meeting the purpose of the service, for example to protect privacy, dignity or safety.

There is no single answer for every service. What is appropriate will depend on what the service is for, who uses it and the particular circumstances.

Where a service is lawfully provided on a single-sex basis, it would relate to biological sex. Service providers must still consider the effect on and needs of other people when deciding whether single-sex provision is justified and how the service should operate.

Key Point

Trans people need to have access to essential services. In the case of services which are necessary for everybody, such as toilets, the EHRC Code of Practice states that "it is very unlikely to be proportionate to put a trans person in a position where there is no service that they are allowed to use".

Can a service ask someone about their sex?

Services should not routinely ask people to prove or say what their sex is without a clear reason. It may be appropriate where sex is relevant to providing a lawful single-sex service, or for purposes such as equality monitoring or service planning.

For facilities such as toilets, the Code says routinely questioning users is unlikely to be practical or appropriate. Where a question is genuinely needed, it should be handled sensitively and privately.

Employment guidance

This Code relates to services, public functions and associations. Further EHRC guidance on the implications of the Supreme Court judgment for employers is still to come.

3. Equality impacts identified by the EHRC

The EHRC identified different potential impacts for different groups.. There may also be impacts for wider groups and it is important to recognise that individuals can be from more than one identity set out below.

Group	Potential impact identified by the EHRC
Sex	The EHRC assessed the overall impact as positive, and said the updated Code gives greater clarity about how sex-based services should operate. It also recognised that decisions may involve balancing the needs and rights of different groups.
Gender reassignment	The EHRC identified negative impacts for trans people. These include being unable to access some services, not having a suitable alternative, having to reveal that they are trans when this would not otherwise be necessary, and increased tension or conflict between groups of service users.
Disability	The EHRC identified a possible negative impact where accessible toilets are used as the main alternative for people not using single sex facilities. This could increase demand for a limited number of accessible toilets and make them less available to disabled people who need them.

Key point

A change intended to meet the needs of one group can sometimes create difficulties for another. The Council needs to consider not only whether an approach is lawful, but how it affects all people and how we reduce the negative impacts of a change.

4. What this means for Cambridge City Council

The changes are directly relevant to a number of Council functions, including:

- public toilets and changing facilities;
- a small number of single-sex activities, for example a women's swimming class;
- the Council's role as a funder and commissioner and its responsibility to support funded organisations to understand and meet equality law; and
- the design of new facilities and decisions made when existing buildings are refurbished.

A cross-party working group has been established involving councillors from the Inclusion and Equity Panel. It also includes voluntary and community organisations representing groups particularly affected by the changes, including disabled people, women, and trans and non-binary people. Its role is to help shape the Council's response to the Code and how that response is communicated.

Council statement

"I know what a worrying time this will be for many communities in our city.

"Council teams, including a cross-party working group, are working hard to develop our response to the updated EHRC Code of Practice, and this will be coming through for public scrutiny this Autumn.

"As part of this process the council is thoughtfully considering the needs, safety and rights of all those who use our services in line with our Equality Pledge Commitment, so that no one is excluded from public services, and that everyone is treated with compassion and respect.

"When Cambridge hosted the national showcase for LGBTQ+ History Month 2016, local organisers wanted to develop an initiative that would provide an equality legacy for our whole community, and the Cambridgeshire-wide Equality Pledge was the result. The Pledge states that:

We believe in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for Cambridge and the wider region to be safe, welcoming and inclusive.

"Cambridge City Council was a proud founder signatory, and our unwavering commitment to this pledge very much continues to underpin all our work. We want everyone to feel safe, welcomed, and included, and this very much includes our trans and non-binary residents."

CLlr Mike Todd-Jones, Cabinet Member for Communities, 17 August 2026

5. Cambridge City Council's proposed strategic approach

The Council's proposed approach has been developed by the task and finish group. At its meeting on 30 September 2026, the group supported the updated approach as the recommendation to take to Cabinet. Its discussions have helped clarify how the approach should work in practice, particularly around accessible provision, understanding people's overlapping needs and the importance of clear communication.

The Council proposes to move towards universal facilities that are open to everyone, alongside accessible facilities for disabled people. Universal provision means provision that is available to anyone rather than restricted by sex.

The group emphasised that universal provision should not be presented as provision specifically for trans people, but for anyone who need to use them. The aim is to support access, privacy and dignity for everyone.

The Council's proposed approach would:

- Reduce situations where staff need to ask about a person's sex when they access a service.
- Maintain lawful, safe and accessible services.
- Continue to use the single-sex exception where there is a clear and justified reason to do so.
- Set out that in normal circumstances, self-identification would be sufficient for access to Council services and facilities.
- Review mandatory equality training to ensure it reflects the updated Code and the Council's position, with additional practical training for staff working in services where single-sex provision remains, so that all users are treated with dignity and respect.
- Review relevant policies and equality impact assessments to reflect the Council's agreed position.

Approach to facilities

Universal provision would be the standard for new facilities. A universal toilet is a fully enclosed, self-contained toilet with a WC, washbasin and hand-drying facilities that can be used by anyone.

- When facilities are refurbished, the Council would move towards universal provision wherever practical and affordable.
- Single-sex facilities would still be provided where there is a clear and justified reason to do so.
- Accessible toilets would be protected wherever possible.
- Separate accessible toilets are already universal toilets. Some accessible toilets can only be accessed by a Radar key. If an accessible toilet also has to serve as universal provision for people who do not have a disability because of space or funding constraints, the Council would work with disabled users to identify and reduce any negative effects.

The Task and Finish group emphasised that the strategic position needs clear practical explanations so residents and staff understand what it means.

The group will advise Cabinet that the Council should develop plain-English information and clear signage to help everyone understand the provision available and find facilities that meet their needs. This should make clear that universal facilities are for everyone. Communications would promote dignity and respect, recognise that disability and other personal characteristics are not always visible, and discourage assumptions or harassment.

Approach to activities and services

The Council would consider its small number of single-sex services and activities individually, using the updated guidance on the single-sex exception. Mixed-sex or inclusive alternatives would be provided alongside them where appropriate.

6. What could this mean in practice?

Example 1: Public toilets

Scenario: A Council building has separate women's and men's toilets and an accessible universal toilet.

What the EHRC guidance says: Under the updated Code, a trans person would be expected to use the single-sex toilet that corresponds with their sex at birth. The Code recognises that this may cause distress or safety concerns for some trans people. The Code makes clear that trans people cannot be left without access to essential facilities and services, such as access to toilets. It gives examples of individual, lockable toilets with their own handbasins that can be used by anyone alongside single-sex provision, or allowing an accessible toilet to be used as a universal facility. Where an accessible toilet is used in this way, organisations should monitor any impact on disabled people.

What this could mean for Cambridge:

- In most circumstances, self-identification would be sufficient, meaning that people will decide themselves what toilet they use, including using a universal toilet.
- **Short term:** where no other universal toilet is available, an accessible toilet could also be available to anyone who does not wish to use the male or female facilities. The impact on disabled users would need to be monitored.
- **Longer term:** when toilets are newly built or refurbished, the Council would aim to provide more fully enclosed universal toilets, subject to available space and funding. Where there are gaps in universal provision, those locations could be prioritised when future improvement works are planned.

Example 2: Women-only swimming session

Scenario: A “Better” leisure centre runs a women-only session because some women would otherwise be less able or willing to take part, for example because of privacy, religious or cultural reasons.

What the EHRC guidance says: A women-only session would be lawful where there is a clear and justified reason. If the single-sex exception was applied, it would be based on biological sex. To rely on the single-sex exception, the provider would need to assess whether restricting the session by sex is necessary and reasonable for the purpose of the service, and whether there is another way of meeting the same need with less impact on others. This assessment should be documented. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) could be used to consider the likely impact on different groups.

What this could mean for Cambridge:

- The Council would work with “Better”, its contracted leisure provider, to make sure the approach reflects the Council’s agreed position and the updated Code.
- In most circumstances, self-identification would be accepted and staff would not routinely question or ask someone to prove their sex.
- Where a service is intended to operate under the single-sex exemption, the Council and provider would document the reasons for that decision and assess the likely impact on different groups.
- As part of documenting the reason for their decision, the provider needs to consider whether the women-only session should remain single-sex and whether a mixed or inclusive alternative could be offered alongside it.

7. Next steps

- The Council's strategic approach is expected to go to Cabinet for formal sign-off in November.
- Relevant equality policies, procedures and staff training will be reviewed to ensure they align with the Council's position and the updated Code.
- A practical tool will be developed to provide further support in helping services decide when the single-sex exception should apply.
- Clear public information and signposting will be needed so residents, community organisations and staff understand what provision is available and what they can expect when using Council services.

Questions for the Inclusion and Equity Panel

1. What positive or negative effects could moving towards universal toilet and changing provision have on different communities?
2. How should the Council monitor these impacts?
3. How should the Council communicate its approach to residents, service users and staff in a way that is clear, and maintains respect and dignity for all?